



Press release

“Secondo il vento faremo le vele”: a course and an experience designed to get people with DS prepared for living as adults.

1st December 2017 - An old maritime proverb underlines the need to get prepared and face the “sea” (with its difficulties), which is a metaphor to say that to navigate, it is necessary to know the wind and how to lift the sails.

Generously supported by the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation** and launched at the end of April 2016, the project “*Secondo il vento faremo le vele*” has come to an end.

24 young people with Down Syndrome from the AIPD local branches Oristano, Pisa and Potenza got involved, sharing the experience of sailing, which represents the path of growth where being asked to face limits was useful to raise knowledge, respect and tolerance.

The first aim of this experience was to offer an extreme/exceptional educational context, by providing something adventurous and the relationship with natural forces like sea and wind. The sailing course taught the students both to guiding the helm, sharing, respecting others’ spaces, cooking, keeping tidy their belongings and collaborating in an extreme situation. The sailboat is a natural conflict "generator"; only by learning how to be coordinated and respectful, it is possible to overcome interpersonal difficulties. In this way, the boat is moving on and it is possible to reach the destination.

After a 6-day sailing course, 3 crews (made up of 8 young people with Down's syndrome, 2 AIPD educators, 2 instructors), with 3 offshore boats, sailed for a week in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The project was developed in the three AIPD branches, involved thanks to the partnership with Tetragonauti ONLUS (Pisa section), Veliamoci (Oristano section) and Circolo Velico Lucano (Potenza).

Both the course and the cruises experiences in the Tuscan archipelago were represented by three photographic exhibitions, held respectively in Oristano - at Caffè Letterario DriMCafè -, Potenza - at the local "Assurd"- and Pisa - at the restaurant "The gardens of Colombre" - and in the exhibition space Sms, in collaboration with “Cena in Bianco Unconventional Dinner Pisa”.

<< It was tough, but we are satisfied. - says the President of the Association of People with Down Syndrome, Paolo Virgilio Grillo, - The guys with DS have learned how to drive a boat, but above all to "dare", they have been helmsmen and sailors, have learned how to be leaders and team members. The sea is not hyper-protective, it challenges us and tests ourselves >>.

There is a Facebook page which, through a virtual diary, shows the guys preparation and the sailing experience; images and comments posted by the participants show that the target has been successfully achieved.

On the 24th of November 2017, during a seminar, the results of the project have been presented, with all the materials designed and used for the training. Everything is available in AIPD headquarter, for anyone interested.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is one of the world's leading private, international philanthropic organization, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. Since 1996, the Foundation has committed more than \$ 2,4 billion, through more than 4,000 grants to nonprofit organizations in 115 nations around the world. The SNF funds organizations and projects, worldwide, that aim to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact, for society at large, and exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also supports projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare.

AIPD - Associazione Italiana Persone Down onlus

Viale delle Milizie 106, 00192 Roma (Italy)

www.aipd.it

email aipd@aipd.it

tel.: (+39) 06.3723909 · tel./fax: (+39) 06.3722510